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Soviet Vulnerability

Soviet rulers' fear of the desire of their own people for freedom has been cited by Allen W. Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, as a vulnerable spot in the armor of Russian despotism which the free world should exploit.

From that fear is born the hostility of the Russian leaders toward the democracies. The same fear is the reason for Soviet oppression of the masses that has caused 1,800,000 persons to flee from East Germany in the last five years to freedom in the West. As far back as 1945, when German resistance collapsed, the Soviet leaders halted fraternization of the Russian soldiers with American troops lest the former learn of the boons of freedom.

The fear of freedom led to the Iron Curtain, a barrier to the outside world which enables Russians to be kept in ignorance, believing only what their Communist masters want them to believe. Oppression and absolutism have been the lot of the Russian people for centuries, and it is difficult to see how they will be able to throw off their chains for years to come.

But the despotism of the Romanoffs fell from internal decay, only to be supplanted by another and worse dictatorship, and Communist despotism's days are numbered as well. That such changes must be gradual does not mean that they are not inevitable.

Mr. Dulles would not underestimate the threat of communism to the free world today, but he commendably emphasizes the greater strength of democracy. It should be recalled that Russia was unable to extend its sphere of influence before World War II and that the spread of communism has been possible only because of the vacuums left in Europe and Asia by that conflict.

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